

The Riverbank

Paul Simon

Frightened by the tone of a phone
In the dead of night
Then staring into darkness
And praying till the morning light
The price already paid
A son gone to the grave
Now the sorrowful parade
To the riverbank

Must be half the county come down
To the riverbank
High school is closed
Same for the local police
Shall we tearfully embrace
Shall we sing "Amazing Grace"
Will the shallow river waters bring us peace

Army dude
Only son
Nowhere to run
No one to turn to
He turns to the gun
It's a cross
It's a stone
It's a fragment of bone
It's a long walk home

A long walk home
Gonna be a long walk home
From the riverbank

Is there any reason why the black pine
Should not weep
Is there a woman or a man who wouldn't understand
Why he could not sleep
And the nightmares when they came
Like poison to the brain
Reminded him again
Life is cheap

Army dude
Only son
Nowhere to run
No one to turn to
He turns to the gun
It's a cross
It's a stone
It's a fragment of bone
It's a long walk home

A long walk home
Gonna be a long walk home
From the riverbank

Army dude's mama
At the edge of the river
Limp as a rag

American flag in her arms
Then a triangle of light
Kissed the red and blue and white
Along the riverbank
Past the dealerships and farms